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SUBJECT: SPECIAL ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

- [1](#)1. Mideast
- [1](#)2. Israel-Turkey Relations
- [1](#)3. Israel-NATO Cooperation

Key stories in the media:

All media reported that yesterday, in his opening speech to the

Knesset's winter session, PM Benjamin Netanyahu blasted the Qtwisted report by (Justice Richard Goldstone's) Qtwisted commission, which he said Qundermines Israel's right to self-defense, encourages terror, and endangers peace. He also stated which people he believed would be liable to face indictment in The Hague for war crimes: Ehud Olmert, Ehud Barak, and Tzipi Livni, Qwho sent IDF soldiers to protect our cities and our citizens. HaQaretz noted that the Goldstone report never mentioned those three names. The media reported that Netanyahu reiterated his demand that the PA recognize Israel as a Jewish state for there to be peace. In her Knesset speech, Livni protested against the Government's inactivity, particularly as far as peace efforts are concerned.

Turkey's cancellation of a planned joint exercise with the Israel Air Force scheduled for this week continues to be one of the main topics covered by Israel's media. The exercise was to also include U.S., Italian, and NATO forces. Media reported that in response to Turkey's decision against Israel's inclusion, the U.S. pulled out of the exercise, forcing Ankara to cancel the drill. Turkey defended its move by saying that the planes that Israel was going to send likely bombed Hamas targets during Operation Cast Lead early this year. The Jerusalem Post reported that 10 Turkish ministers are scheduled to travel to Syria today to take part in a meeting of the newly-formed Turkey-Syria High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council. Israel Radio and other media reported that Tzipi Livni was interviewed last night for Turkish state television TRT for a special interview in which she tried to relay a direct message to the Turkish public in wake of the crisis in Israel-Turkey relations.

Livni said in the interview that relations between Israel and Turkey were of a strategic nature and - as chairwoman of the opposition - unrelated to the specific government that was in power in Jerusalem, noting that there was no distinction between the Israeli governing coalition and opposition on this matter.

Maariv reported that an Israeli missile vessel will soon join NATO patrol activity in the Mediterranean to prevent terrorist activity in the sea.

All media reported that last night a minor Hizbullah operative was killed in an explosion in the village of Tayr Fils, southern Lebanon. Five other activists may have been killed in the blast. Israel complained to UNIFIL that Hizbullah likely breaches U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701, which bans the group from having weapons south of the Litani River.

On Sunday HaQaretz wrote: QThe differences between Israel and the Palestinian Authority appear to remain substantial even after a series of meetings with the U.S. special envoy to the Middle East, George Mitchell. Positions may have even hardened, with no breakthrough imminent, despite U.S. President Barack Obama's winning of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Leading media quoted the German weekly Der Spiegel as saying yesterday that U.S. forces intercepted a German ship allegedly carrying weapons from Iran to Syria.

Israel Radio reported that U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon supports the Palestinian proposal to hold a discussion on the Goldstone report soon at the U.N. Human Rights Council. He spoke yesterday by phone with PA President Mahmoud Abbas and said he supported Abbas's efforts to have the report discussed. Yesterday Yediot quoted a senior Israeli official as saying: QWe brought this upon ourselves. Our unnecessary boasting after Abu Mazen's decision to consent to postpone the discussion by six months forced him to change the decision.

HaQaretz reported that the U.S. told Egypt that it has reservations about the intra-Palestinian reconciliation effort in its current form and timing. The newspaper reported that U.S. Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George Mitchell told his high-ranking Egyptian interlocutors Omar Suleiman and Ahmed Abu al-Gheit that the U.S. expects any Palestinian government and any minister taking part in it to accept the three conditions that the Quartet has imposed on Hamas.

HaQaretz reported that Shin Bet is investigating who has distributed leaflets containing instructions on how to make bombs and weapons; the flyers were circulated in various illegal outposts one year ago.

Similar flyers were passed out before the Gay Pride Parades in

Jerusalem during the past three years. The flyers were titled, "Death to Sodomites" and included instructions on how to make Molotov cocktails and other improvised weapons to be used against gays and lesbians. The media reported that, in a separate development, the IDF banned three residents of the radical settlement of Yitzhar suspected of involvement in illegal activity from entering the West Bank.

Israel Hayom reported that senior Israeli officials have recently begun to voice their concerns that one of the indirect results of the international uproar over the Goldstone report will be a successful Palestinian effort to sabotage Israel's efforts to become a member of the OECD.

The media reported that this year's Nobel Prize winner for chemistry, Professor Ada Yonath, caused uproar on Saturday when she expressed her opinion regarding the case of the kidnapped soldier Gilad Shalit during an interview with IDF Radio. She said that all the terrorists who are imprisoned in Israel should be released with no connection to the deal. "Anyone sitting in our jails who is not an ordinary criminal but rather someone whom we term a terrorist should not be in our prisons whether he has blood on his hands or not. We should think of ways to make sure that people won't have the motivation to go out to kill or be killed."

Israel Hayom and other leading media cited the results of a poll commissioned by the Geneva Initiative organization and carried out ten days ago:

- Fifty-one (51) percent of the public is pleased with PM Netanyahu's performance on matters of state, as opposed to 33% who are displeased with that performance.
- Forty-six (46) percent of the respondents said that they believed that if the prime minister were to take a major political initiative, such a course of action was liable to increase public support for him. The poll also found that the public is equally divided, with 46% in favor and 46% opposed, to the proposed arrangement in the holy basin of Jerusalem that would leave the Jewish Quarter and the Western Wall under Israeli control, while placing the other quarters and the Temple Mount under Palestinian control.
- Furthermore, 61% of the respondents said they supported a

Palestinian state without an army.

- The poll also found that the Geneva agreement enjoys the support of a majority of the respondents (56%), but that most respondents (55%) said they did not believe that such an agreement could be reached.

1. Mideast:

Block Quotes:

I. "A Prize for Failure"

Military correspondent Alex Fishman wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (10/11): QLast March, he came here as the Qhigh commissioner.Q Everyone trembled with fear. He supposedly had a plan, he presented demands and dictates, and sent the Israeli Government into a corner. When people here thought that he was irritable, the Defense Minister abandoned his post and flew to New York especially to calm him down. And, mirabile dictu: in October, the same George Mitchell comes here, but in the role of the nice American uncle, offering advice with a smile. At the beginning of the year, he knew exactly what we had to do. Seven months later, he wants to know our suggestions for the peace process with the Palestinians, what we can contribute in order to strengthen Abu Mazen. What started with unusual momentum has ended with nothing. The gap between the Mitchell of last March and the Mitchell of October is the story of the dismal failure of American diplomacy in the Middle East.... There is no such thing as an American president visiting an ally such as Saudi Arabia without getting an agreement on the object of his visit in advance, but his staff tripped him up.... Now the film is being corrected. An expert, good old Dennis Ross, has been brought in. Ross is an international expert on the Middle East, but he is no less an expert on procedure. In

diplomacy, essence is less important. Procedure counts. Therefore, they are going back now to the game in the Middle East that everyone loves best: who will meet with whom, who will report to whom, which committees will be established. Blah, blah, blah. That's what happens when you do not have to sweat too much. The director, producer and screenwriter already got the prize in advance, anyway.

II. "Netanyahu in the Consensus"

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote in the independent, left-leaning HaQaretz (10/13): Q[In his speech to the Knesset yesterday] Netanyahu spoke in the name of the national consensus, in the knowledge that his political situation is stable and the public supports him. A poll published this week by the Geneva Initiative -- a left-wing group that is not one of Netanyahu's fans -- found that 51 percent of Israelis are happy with his policies and only 33 percent are unhappy. In this situation, when he represents the center, Netanyahu can declare that Israel is ready for peace and is waiting for a Palestinian leadership that will declare an end to all outstanding claims and recognize Israel as a Jewish state. Until the Palestinians muster the courage to do so, Netanyahu will busy himself with land reform, paving roads, and fighting crime.

III. "Explosion Is on the Way"

Veteran journalist and television anchor Yaron London wrote in Yediot Aharonot (10/12): QYour neighbor, a difficult character, covets your plot of land, and openly talks about the day when he will remove your house. Can you sleep soundly? This, in essence, is the explanation for the fact that it is so easy to inflame masses of Muslims with the allegation that Israel schemes to demolish the Temple Mount mosques. In the eyes of many Jews, these buildings are an abomination, like the despicable object (of unclear nature) that the defilers placed at the site of the Temple's altar. This is not proof that Israel plots to destroy the holy sites of Islam, but it is enough to make the believers lose sleep. There are no Jews who declare that they intend to take immediate action, but there have already been people who tried, and they are walking about freely in our midst.... I fear that the errors made by the rational part of the people of Israel since the Six-Day War can no longer be rectified. The messianic madness cannot be cured by conventional means. Perhaps the disaster can be postponed. Firstly, the archeological excavations in the holy basin should be stopped for a few years, during which time the findings should be examined and research papers on them should be published. Secondly, we should invite non-Jewish archeologists, theologians, Muslim and Christian clerics, historians, preservation architects and the like, to see things for themselves. This will probably help as much as trying to resuscitate a dead body, but what do we have to lose?

12. Israel-Turkey Relations:

Block Quotes:

1. "Ankara Must Decide"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (10/13): QWho would have thought -- Turkey and Armenia agreeing to normalize political relations. Armenia's president planning to attend a football match in Turkey. And George Papandreou, the new Greek Prime Minister, making Turkey the destination of his first trip abroad. These are encouraging examples of how age-old animosities are being relegated to the dustbin of history. Too bad, then, that Ankara appears to be simultaneously doing everything it can to junk its relationship with the Jewish state.... Turkey is an irreplaceable ally. Israelis want our two countries to enjoy cordial relations despite everything that's happened. The onus is now on Ankara to make plain that it, too, wants the relationship to continue. It would thereby also be signaling that Turkey wants to be a bridge between Islam and the West -- instead of yet another barrier.

II. "No More Playing Chicken with Turkey"

Senior Middle East affairs analyst Zvi Bar'el wrote in the independent, left-Ha'aretz (10/12): QTurkey did not hide its deep opposition to Israel's policies in the territories in general and to Operation Lead Cast in particular. Erdogan's outburst against President Shimon Peres last January at the Davos gathering did not stem from Islamist or pro-Iranian objectives. Erdogan's support for a U.N. deliberation of the Goldstone Report and his declaration that Qthose responsible for war crimes must be identified and held accountable,Q is not based on any wish to please Iran or Syria. Turkey has a steady and clear policy on this issue and it is not a proxy for any country. Public opinion exists in Turkey too and it is influential, and when the Prime Minister sees thousands of Turks protesting against Israel's policy in Jerusalem, he cannot remain indifferent. At the same time, Turkey continues and will continue to have normal ties with Israel because such a relationship is part of Turkey's strategy, but today it finds itself in a different international status, of the sort that allows it to also take swipes at Israel.

13. Israel-NATO Cooperation:

Block Quotes:

Liberal columnist and television anchor Ofer Shelach wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (10/13): QNATO uses cooperation with armies of states that are not part of the alliance as a sort of certificate of esteem, or as a prize for good behavior. In Israel's case, the issue at hand is the former of those two.... The importance of having an Israeli ship join the force is also related, of course, to the timing-at a time of tension between Israel and some of the members of the alliance, first and foremost Turkey. The Israel Navy, often the army's neglected little sister, earned this right, and not by chance.... The IDF praises the navy's contribution in the battle against arms smuggling to the Gaza Strip. That said, it is clear that the navy cannot act far from Israel's shores in such a way that it is not discovered by NATO forces, which closely monitors activity in the waters of such a sensitive region.... However, along with the esteem and the cooperation, the overt and the covert, there is also responsibility: Israel needs the support of foreign forces, which receive orders from foreign governments, in order to safeguard its most immediate security interests. It has no choice but to recognize the fact that the response of these governments to its actions, and their interests, no longer fall under the category of Qwhat the goyim say,Q which as we know [as a phrase uttered by David Ben-Gurion], is far less important than what the Jews do. And those who need international consent for activity far from the border, must be much more attentive to what is said in those countries about what it is doing close to the border, or even inside its own territory.

CUNNINGHAM